

# Sample Inhalant Abuse Prevention Messages

When providing inhalant abuse prevention messages several approaches should be considered. Messages about drug abuse prevention are most often delivered in health or drug abuse prevention classes. However, because products that are abused as inhalants are found in schools, youth programs, and homes, a much broader approach in the delivery of prevention messages should be used. Often, a prevention message about inhalants can be easily added to an existing health and safety message with a few sentences. *Additionally, we reinforce the association of inhalants as poisons, toxins, pollutants, and fire hazards without suggesting or reinforcing the idea that inhalants have a drug-like effect.* Below are some sample inhalant prevention messages that can be easily incorporated into existing lessons or discussions.

<p><b><u>Poisons and Pollution</u></b></p> <p>Topic of Discussion: The many ways poisons/pollution can get into your body.</p>	<p>Question to class: What are some ways that poisons can get into your body?</p> <p>“One type of poison is a poison that you might breathe. Chemicals that evaporate or go into the air from paint, glue, gasoline, and all aerosol containers are poisonous to your body. When we inhale these poisons they can damage our lungs, liver, kidneys, nerves and brain. It is important to keep these poisons out of the air and water and not let them into your body. If you are going to be exposed to air polluted with these chemicals it is extremely important to wear protective masks and other appropriate protective gear.”</p>
<p><b><u>Fire Safety</u></b></p> <p>Topic of Discussion: Dangers associated with flammable or explosive items</p>	<p>“Some things we have learned about that are flammable or explosive are also extremely dangerous to breathe. Every gas or liquid that easily burns or explodes is also poisonous to breathe into your body. Some examples of these gasses and liquids are: gasoline, oil-based paints and thinners, nail polish remover, propane, and butane.”</p>
<p><b><u>First Aid</u></b></p> <p>Topic of Discussion: Products that can cause damage to your body if misused and how to use them safely.</p>	<p>–“When we don’t use products/solvents (like paints, aerosols, gasoline, solvents, art and office supplies,) safely, they can make us feel nauseous, cough, affect our judgment and damage our bodies. In some cases misusing these products can even kill us.”</p> <p>–“What are some safer ways these products can be used?” (Use out-of-doors or in a well-ventilated room, use protective masks with special filters, etc.)</p> <p>–“What should you do if you feel the effects of a solvent?” (Open windows, move out-of-doors, get fresh air . . . If someone has become unconscious, call an ambulance immediately.)</p>
<p><b><u>Arts and Crafts, Shops, Labs, Cosmetology</u></b></p> <p>Topic of Discussion: Danger of using solvents and solvent-based products.</p>	<p>“When we use solvents and solvent-based products (such as, paints, glues, volatile solvents, nail polish, nail polish remover, aerosol hair sprays) the first thing we need to do is take precautions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.) We need to make sure we have good ventilation and/or use protective filter masks.</li> <li>2.) We need to avoid breathing the fumes because they are poisonous and can damage our lungs, liver, kidneys, nerves, and brain.</li> <li>3.) We need to be aware that inhaling the fumes can cause sudden death.”</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>Cooking</u></b></p> <p>Topic of Discussion: Fuel gasses and propellants found in cooking supplies.</p>	<p>–“Aerosol cooking oil sprays use propane and iso-butane as propellants. These fuel gasses need to be used with extreme caution and never used around open fires because they are highly flammable. The propellants found in aerosol cooking sprays are equally dangerous and poisonous to breathe. They can cause brain damage and even sudden death if inhaled.”</p> <p>–“Whipped cream in cans uses nitrous oxide (which is also used as an anesthetic gas) as a propellant. Breathing this industrial gas, even at low levels, can result in nerve and brain damage. Overdoses can cause death by choking, suffocation, or by stopping your breathing.”</p>

Last Revised December 2004

## MAINE INHALANT ABUSE PREVENTION TASK FORCE

A Project of the New England Institute of Addiction Studies / Funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention

For more information about inhalants please contact

Maine Office of Substance Abuse Information and Resource Center

Phone: 1-800-499-0027 TTY – 1-800-215-7604

Email: [osa.ircosa@maine.gov](mailto:osa.ircosa@maine.gov) Web Address: <http://maineosa.org/irc>